



COMMITTING TO ADOLESCENT WELL-BEING

Guidance Note for Government-Led Commitments to Adolescent Well-Being

I. Background

[1.8 Billion Young People for Change](#) is a global campaign for adolescent well-being. We are calling for increased financing and policy action to meet the important needs of 1.8 billion adolescents and youth in the world today.

The campaign, launched in 2022, is supported by nearly 200+ organizations from all regions of the world, and continues to receive growing support from more partners. It is coordinated by PMNCH (The Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health) to advance the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

On 11-12 October 2023, the 1.8 campaign will celebrate a major milestone with the world's largest-ever gathering for adolescent well-being. The **Global Forum for Adolescents** will be a two-day virtual convening of thousands of organizations – youth networks, governments, private sector, donors, the UN and others – to raise attention to the need for immediate action to advance the major determinants of adolescent well-being.

During – and in the immediate lead-up – to the October Forum, Governments and non-state actors are invited to pledge their support for adolescent well-being by making a SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound) commitment. Commitments will be amplified and disseminated by the campaign for wider attention and support.

This Guidance Note aims to provide information to Governments, and all those who support them, about how SMART commitments can be created in association with the 1.8 campaign and the Global Forum for Adolescents.

Commitments developed in association with the Global Forum in October 2023 will shine a spotlight on opportunities to accelerate progress and strengthen accountability in countries already prioritising this population and build momentum in those where more attention is needed.

The commitments made by Governments and non-state actors will seek to amplify a focus on adolescents within existing frameworks and initiatives at global, regional, and national level while maintaining a clear and bold focus on adolescents as a neglected population and serve as a concrete and focused contribution to the SDG Summit in September 2023¹ and beyond.

¹ The SDGs with high relevance to attaining adolescent well-being include (but are not limited to): SDG 2 on zero hunger, SDG 3 on good health and well-being, SDG 4 on quality education, SDG 5 on gender equality, SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation, SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth and SDG 16 on peace, justice, and strong institutions.

II. Scope

2.1 What is a commitment?

A “commitment” is a specific, time-bound policy, financing and/or programmatic pledge made by a national government to address a policy gap or to global, regional and/or national policy processes and platforms to drive progress.

Commitments should be of the highest quality, including as many as possible of the following attributes:

- Government-led financial, policy and/or service delivery domestic pledge to advance Adolescent Well-Being. Commitments may be supported by ODA;
- Commitments are made in support of national social development plans, policies and budgets that benefit Adolescent Well-Being;
- Commitments are made by governments in support of national campaigns and/or global or regional policy processes and platforms led by Member State-led institutions or initiatives in support of these processes.
- Commitments should be context-specific, highlighting concrete and measurable results that can be monitored through established institutionalized accountability mechanisms;
- Commitments should be SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound; and
- Commitments should be ‘new’ – i.e., not previously announced – or, at minimum, ‘additional’ to any commitments previously announced;

All commitments must be demonstrably related to one or more of the following five domains of [Adolescent Well-Being](#):

- 1) health and nutrition;
- 2) connectedness, positive values, and contribution to society;
- 3) safety and a supportive environment;
- 4) learning, competence, education, skills, and employability; and
- 5) agency and resilience.

2.2 Principles and processes for commitment-making

Governments are encouraged to support their commitments to prioritize adolescent well-being by:

- Increasing the level and effectiveness of domestic and donor spending on adolescent well-being, in line with commitments made to Universal Health Coverage and those made beyond the health sector;
- Engaging adolescents in all legal, policy and programme processes that affect them;
- Developing multisectoral, whole-of-government policy approaches that truly address adolescent health and well-being;
- Developing and adopting a framework for Adolescent Well-Being to ensure cohesive programming and measurement;
- Prioritizing disaggregated and high-quality data collection about adolescents to guide action and define who they are and what they want and need;
- Strengthening partnerships at all levels to ensure linkages between the Adolescent Well-Being agenda and broader efforts to address young people’s livelihoods, education and skills, as well as productivity;
- Prioritizing Adolescent Well-Being in resolutions tabled during meetings of the United Nations General Assembly, SDG Summit, and/or the World Health Assembly; and

- Amplifying commitments at the Global Forum for Adolescents in October 2023, in line with achieving the objectives of 'Youth2030: The United Nations Youth Strategy' and the agenda to accelerate progress on the SDGs in the Decade of Action 2020-2030.

2.3 Alignment with existing initiatives and efforts

Government-led commitments should align where possible with existing national commitments, such as national pledges made in support of global goals or platforms for action, such as ICPD+25, FP2030, and the Generation Equality Forum. In cases where governments have already pledged to these global platforms, they can build on these pledges by restating their pledge to add new focus on reaching adolescent populations. Where possible, commitments should be reflective of national commitments in support of the Sustainable Development Goals, strengthening cross sectoral and holistic approaches needed to accelerate change for adolescents.

2.4 How to develop a commitment

Non-state actors (youth groups, NGOs, private business, academic, health providers, etc.) are encouraged to work with national Governments to support the development of a meaningful new national commitment, e.g., by providing evidence and analysis or community-level information to identify areas of need and feasible policy approaches.

The following principles/approaches are encouraged in this process:

- Collaborate with, and work through, existing national partner platform(s) to identify relevant stakeholders, constituencies and partners to be involved in commitment-making, ensuring meaningful participation by multiple constituency groups;
- Promote the meaningful leadership of young people and youth-led organizations (including the PMNCH-supported Adolescent and Youth grantees in countries where they exist²) in accordance with the [Global Consensus Statement on Meaningful Adolescent and Youth Engagement](#) (MAYE), including identifying a strong youth-led network to act as a co-lead;
- Non-state actors can support Government leadership by coordinating multi-stakeholder consultations and collaborative processes to assess and analyze:
 - the existence, and quality of, commitments for Adolescent Well-Being;
 - the status of their implementation, as well as gaps where new or additional commitments are required;
 - opportunities for national interventions, statements and commitments to prioritize Adolescent Well-Being in various global, regional, and national decision-making fora; and
 - how the Government has influenced decision-making for Adolescent Well-Being in various decision-making fora, and how the bold actions aligned with one or more of the five domains of the Adolescent Well-being can be amplified during the Global Forum for Adolescents in October 2023.

² Ghana, India, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mexico, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Zambia, Zimbabwe

2.5 Type of commitments

Governments are invited to draft written commitments in relation to one or more of the following three areas:

- **Financial** – commitments aimed at mobilizing domestic resources, and/or catalytic donor financing, or supporting key actors in a country to implement plans to improve the health and well-being of adolescents;
- **Policy** – commitments aimed at developing appropriate processes (including legislation, governmental policy-making) and supporting advocacy to ensure adolescent wellbeing;
- **Programme (service and delivery)** – strengthening and expanding programmes to meet the needs of adolescents, enabling improved access to services, knowledge, and skills across the five domains of Adolescent Well-Being, including health, SRHR, social protection, education, labour, etc.

As noted above, commitments should be designed and formulated according to the 'SMART' framework:

S	Specific	The commitment refers to a specific action (financial, policy and/or service delivery) and indicates the population group who will benefit from the action.
M	Measurable	The commitment can be monitored through (a set of) an indicator(s) to enable its progress and achievement to be tracked.
A	Achievable	The commitment refers to a realistic context, based on availability of human and financial resources as well as level of progress achieved in the past.
R	Relevant	The commitment reflects a country's situation, national priorities and the challenges it faces.
T	Time-bound	The commitment's key milestone is to be met within a realistic timeframe for achievement.

Example of SMART financial commitments for Adolescent Well-Being

Commit to invest USD 1 million annually for Gender-Based Violence research and innovation to boost evidence-based programming by 2026 (example: Government of Kenya, pledged to the Generation Equality Forum)

Examples of SMART policy commitments for Adolescent Well-Being

Government of North Macedonia commits to introduce comprehensive sexuality education in line with the UN guidelines, as a subject of choice, by promoting acceptance of CSE in student of primary school to the maximum extent possible, and by promoting its benefits, through:

- *implementation and further development of the national plan for inclusion of CSE in school curricula,*
- *allocation of separate budget line for the development of the national plans for primary education in North Macedonia, including for the CSE as part of the national education program.*

Example of SMART programme and service delivery commitments for Adolescent Well-being

Ensure that more than 3.5 million young people, including vulnerable youth, have access to age-appropriate information on sexual & reproductive health and rights (SRHR) through the national curriculum, and capacitating more than 80,000 teachers, both in- and pre-service, on Health and Sexuality Education towards that aim by no later than 2030. (Government of Cambodia, pledged to ICPD +25)

III. Launching commitments

Governments are encouraged to announce new commitments for Adolescent Well-Being in conjunction with the following global events in 2023:

- UN High-level Political Forum in July 2023;
- United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in September 2023;
- G20 Summit in September 2023.

The deadline for submitting a commitment is **5 September 2023**. Governments are encouraged to submit the commitments as early as possible. This will enable all commitments made to date be featured during a High-level dialogue at the SDG Summit in September 2023; and the Global Forum for Adolescents on 11-12 October 2023, enabling national/regional/global media recognition for these pledges and sharing information with partners to enable broad-based support for national implementation. The 1.8 campaign may aggregate individual Government pledges with those of other governments to generate overall visibility and attention.

IV. Accountability

Commitments made in alignment with the goals of the 1.8 campaign will be published on the Global Forum for Adolescents website.

Commitments will be followed through existing formal reporting and accountability mechanisms, including:

- Global reviews (Voluntary National Reviews for the SDGs, Universal Periodic Review),
- Specific commitment/initiative related accountability mechanism (e.g., FP2030, GEF),
- National accountability mechanisms (e.g., parliamentary reviews etc.), and
- Accountability country profiles and scorecards

Should you have any questions or require any support in regard to the commitment process, please contact Tahira Shireen Mustafa, Technical Officer, PMNCH at mustafat@who.int.

Annex I: Partner support for Government-led Commitments

A. Identifying priorities for government-led commitments in support of Adolescent Well-being

National governments and actors will be encouraged and supported, by in-country PMNCH partners along with organisations with expertise in adolescent well-being to mobilize country stakeholders under Government's leadership and with adolescents and young people meaningfully involved to agree on adolescent well-being priorities. This prioritisation exercise should include in-country H6 partners and civil society partners to ensure linkages with existing initiatives and coordinated approach for data gathering.

This prioritisation exercise will be informed by:

- Country specific scoping/ review (see Guidance on how to conduct a scoping exercise on adolescent-specific SDG review): this exercise should include rapid reviews of current strengths and gaps in adolescent health and wellbeing, in line with the above-mentioned Agenda for Action and Adolescent Well-Being definition. Rapid reviews should draw on existing data and analysis, such as WHO's Adolescent country profiles³. The results of this technical exercise will feed into a prioritization discussion, packaged and disseminated, and used by partners to guide their advocacy actions via the multi-stakeholder engagement in country, coordinated by the PMNCH lead-partner in select countries, including the meaningful engagement of adolescents and young people. This scoping exercise will underpin advocacy efforts and inform which new or renewed commitments are needed.
- Recommendations emerging from Adolescent Well-being Framework, the BMJ collection and the multi-stakeholder consultations which provide a framework for Agenda for Action and include the following:

Governments and all stakeholders to protect adolescents in all their diversity, using principles of equity and equality, to promote the multi-dimensional nature of adolescent well-being in post Covid-19 and climate change affected world through data driven strengthened political commitment, policies and domestic resource mobilization and financing, supported by Official Development Assistance (ODA) to:

- **Ask 1: Improve adolescent health and well-being** by addressing mental health & well-being issues, nutrition, sexual and reproductive health and rights, reducing interpersonal violence, road injury, HIV and self-harm
- **Ask 2: Foster connectedness, positive values and healthy relationships** through cohesive programming that focus on creating enabling environments at multiple levels e.g., the Community level, Familial level, School level and Digital Spaces.
- **Ask 3: Prevent stigma and discrimination, and sexual and gender-based violence toward adolescents** through protection, sensitization, and education programmes including Comprehensive Sexuality Education
- **Ask 4: Support adolescents to stay in school, invest in education and skill development** through targeted programmes and policies for all and especially those most at risk of dropping - out and non-enrolment;
- **Ask 5: Promote agency and resilience through empowerment and engagement of adolescents and youth** from all communities in designing data driven and evidence-based policies & programmes, including programme implementation, governance, monitoring and evaluation

³ [Adolescent country profile \(who.int\)](https://www.who.int/publications-detail/adolescent-country-profiles)

B. Coordination support by partners for government-led commitment generation

Work on commitment mobilization at the national level will start ahead of the Global Forum for Adolescents so that meaningful pledges with substantive engagement of young people themselves can be launched at the Forum. This work should include: the process to conduct rapid reviews, identifying priority areas, progress to be made and gaps; stakeholder coalition building around identified priorities; nationally agreed plans for developing SMART commitments; launching commitments; initiating accountability and follow-up.

Partners will have multiple opportunities to engage in the development of the Agenda for Action for Adolescents to be launched at the Global Forum, including through [What Young People Want](#) initiative and mobilization of commitments at a national, regional and global level. These will vary in each context and will include but are not limited to:

- Regionally and nationally focused webinars for national advocates can be held to explain the commitment making process and opportunities for engagement for partners and youth advocates. These webinars can serve as an opportunity to connect with others in the same country to coordinate efforts.
- Partner engagement in multi-stakeholder processes including through the PMNCH Digital Advocacy Hubs, in country consultations, rapid reviews and analysis and commitment development via the processes coordinated by lead partners.
- UN agencies and partners can engage at national-level through their existing networks to support reviews of existing commitments and mobilisation of new commitments and to ensure alignment with ongoing initiatives for greater long-term collaboration and accountability.
- Launch of government-led commitments at the national and regional-level during locally organized events in support of the Global Forum for Adolescents.
- National partners will play a crucial role in the accountability of commitments following the Forum and can be supported by a series of capacity building resources and tools.